

# CITY OF SAVANNAH

## SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS (STVRs)



As a popular visitor destination, Savannah attracts visitors from around the world who prefer a residential, home-like setting for their stay. This has resulted in the growth of short-term vacation rentals as a type of lodging accommodation.

In 2014, the City of Savannah approved a zoning text amendment defining short-term vacation rentals and specific conditions associated with the use. A short-term vacation rental is an accommodation for transient guests where, in exchange for compensation, a residential dwelling unit is provided for lodging for a period of no more than 30 consecutive days. Such use may or may not include an on-site manager. A residential dwelling includes all housing types and excludes group living or other lodging uses.

An ordinance was also adopted to better manage short-term vacation rentals by providing standards for life-safety and building codes, clarifying compliance with revenue requirements and protecting the quality of our neighborhoods. It requires owners of short-term vacation rentals to obtain a certificate if they wish to rent their dwelling.

As a type of lodging establishments, owners are subject to all applicable state and local taxes to include the hotel/motel tax.

### STEP-BY-STEP CERTIFICATION PROCESS

To secure a short-term vacation rental certificate, the following information must be submitted to the City for review and approval:

1. Short-term Vacation Rental Application
2. Short-Term Vacation Rental Agent Written Certification Form
3. Sworn Code Compliance Verification Form
4. Written Exemplar Agreement between Property owner/rental management company and tenant
5. Proof of Property Ownership
6. Proof of Insurance
7. Non-Refundable Annual Fee

Once these items are processed by the City, the applicant will need to secure a Business Tax Certificate from the City's Revenue Department. Once the Business Tax Certificate has been issued, the City will provide the applicant with a Short-term Vacation Rental Certificate. This document must be posted in a visible area inside the property.

Each month, the applicant must remit the hotel/motel tax to the City's Revenue Department.

# CITY OF SAVANNAH

## SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS (STVR's)

### CONTACTS

**TOURISM MANAGEMENT  
& AMBASSADORSHIP  
DEPARTMENT**  
*Short - Term Vacation Rental  
Applications*

City of Savannah  
P.O. Box 1027  
Savannah, GA 31402

Phone: (912) 525-1500  
Fax: (912) 525-1629

[www.savannahga.gov/tourism](http://www.savannahga.gov/tourism)

### DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Business Acceptance  
Application (Zoning)  
&  
Code Compliance  
Verification Form  
(Building Inspection)*

5515 Abercorn Street  
Savannah, GA 31405

Phone: (912) 651-6510

### REVENUE DEPARTMENT

*Business Tax Certificate &  
Hotel/Motel Tax*

132 E. Broughton St.  
P.O. Box 1027  
Savannah, GA 31402

Phone: (912) 651-6450

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **Is my rental property considered a short-term vacation rental?**

A short-term vacation rental (STVR) is defined as an accommodation for transient guests where, in exchange for compensation, a residential dwelling unit is provided for lodging for a period of time not to exceed 30 consecutive days. Such use may or may not include an on-site manager. A residential dwelling includes all housing types and excludes group living or other lodging uses.

#### **What are the zoning conditions that apply to short-term vacation rentals?**

The zoning conditions for STVR are:

- No more than 2 adults per bedroom plus 2 adults for each rental unit
- No change to the outside appearance of the dwelling unit or premises
- Parking - Studio-up to 3 bedrooms: The requirement for the type of dwelling unit, 4+ bedrooms: The requirement for the type of dwelling unit, plus 1 space for each 2 additional bedrooms

#### **How long is the short-term vacation rental certificate valid for?**

The STVR certificate is valid until December 31 and must be renewed annually.

#### **How much is the annual certificate?**

The initial fee is \$150 for the first year. Renewals are \$50 every year after the first year.

#### **If I sell my property, is my short-term vacation rental certificate transferable?**

The STVR certificate is non-transferable per section 8-10011 of City Code.

#### **Does my certificate apply to multiple properties?**

A separate application must be obtained for each property used as a STVR.

#### **What if I don't get a short-term vacation rental certificate?**

Failure to secure a STVR certificate will result in City enforcement which may include legal action.

#### **What happens if I receive a violation?**

The staff board will issue a written finding identifying the infraction. With each code violation, a fine will be incurred by the property owner. If three code violations are received within a 12-month period, the City will revoke the STVR certificate.

#### **Why do I have to have to designate an agent?**

The City requires that the property owner designate an individual to serve as a rental agent to respond to issues associated with the STVR. The agent may be the property owner.

#### **If I rent my property for more than 30-days, do I have to pay hotel/motel tax?**

For properties rented for 90-days or less, hotel/motel taxes must be remitted on the first 30 days of the rental.

#### **If I use a property management company, do I need to have a business tax certificate?**

As an owner of a STVR, you will need to obtain a business tax certificate. This requirement also applies to individuals who are using property management companies.

#### **Where do I turn in my Short-Term Vacation Rental Certificate Application?**

Submit applications to the Tourism Management & Ambassadorship Department at P.O. Box 1027, Savannah, GA 31402 or email the form to [tourism@savannahga.gov](mailto:tourism@savannahga.gov).

#### **Where do I pay my Hotel/Motel Taxes ?**

Hotel/Motel Taxes are due each month. Mail the hotel/motel monthly return form along with payment to the Revenue Department, P.O. Box 1228, Savannah, GA 31402-1228.

### QUESTIONS?

Contact the Tourism  
Management &  
Ambassadorship  
Department at  
912-525-1500 or  
[tourism@savannahga.gov](mailto:tourism@savannahga.gov)



## ANNUAL SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTAL CERTIFICATE APPLICATION

Please submit the following information to the Tourism Management & Ambassadorship Department:

- A separate application must be submitted for each short-term vacation rental property
- The following must be included with your application:
  - ☐ Business Acceptance Application/Letter to confirm property is in the appropriate zoning district
  - ☐ Short-Term Vacation Rental Agent Written Certification Form
  - ☐ Sworn Code Compliance Verification Form
  - ☐ Written Exemplar Agreement between Property owner/rental management company and tenant
  - ☐ Proof of Property Ownership
  - ☐ Proof of Insurance
  - ☐ Non-refundable initial annual fee payable to the City of Savannah at \$150. Renewals are \$50 every year after the first year.
- Once this information is processed, the applicant will be notified to obtain a business tax certificate from the Revenue Department. When the business tax certificate is issued, the Short-Term Vacation Rental Certificate will be issued.
- All short-term vacation rental property owners will need to secure a business tax certificate.
- Submit information to: Tourism Management & Ambassadorship Department, P.O. Box 1027, Savannah, GA 31402 or email to [tourism@savannahga.gov](mailto:tourism@savannahga.gov)

**Owner(s) of the unit for which a short-term vacation rental certificate is sought**

*If the owner is not a natural person, the applicant will need to identify all partners, officers and/or directors of any such entity, including personal contact information.*

Property Owner Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

P.O. BOX 1027, SAVANNAH, GA 31402

PHONE 912.525.1500 TDD 912.651.6702 FAX 912.525.1629 SAVANNAHGA.GOV

**Short-term Vacation Rental Unit Information**

Address of Short-term Vacation Rental Property: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Identification Number of Property: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Bedrooms: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Parking Spaces: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Off-Street Parking Spaces: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rental Agent Contact Information**

Rental Agent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

24-hour contact phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned applicant:

- Acknowledge receiving a copy of Part 8, Chapter 11, Sec 8-10012 entitled Short-term Vacation Rental Certificate, have reviewed it, understand its requirements, and will comply with regulations contained within this section;
- Agree to use my best efforts to assure that use of the premises by short-term vacation rental occupants will not disrupt the neighborhood, and will not interfere with the rights of neighboring property owners to the quiet enjoyment of their properties;
- Certify that I have answered all the questions contained herein and know the same to be true and correct. Further, I understand that any Tourism Management and Ambassadorship approval issued, based upon false information or misrepresentation provided by the applicant, will be null and void and subject to penalty as provided by law and ordinances; and
- Authorize the City of Savannah to verify information contained in the application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name



CITY OF  
*Savannah*  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT

REVIEW # \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS ACCEPTANCE APPLICATION  
5515 Abercorn Street ~ Savannah, GA 31405  
P.O. Box 1027 ~ Savannah, GA 31402-1027  
Phone: 912.651.6530 / Fax: 912.651.6543  
[www.savannahga.gov](http://www.savannahga.gov)

This form will assist the Development Services Department in reviewing your proposed business. Please submit this application with your Business Tax Certificate application. A Building Permit, Site Plan, and/or a Zoning Board of Appeals application, etc. may be required in order to complete the approval process. Additionally, inspections and other fees may be required.

PROJECT ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ PIN: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF BUSINESS: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF OWNER/CORP: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

PREVIOUS BUSINESS USE OR ACTIVITY: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPOSED BUSINESS USE OR ACTIVITY

HOME OCCUPATION ☐ TYPE: \_\_\_\_\_ RETAIL ☐ TYPE: \_\_\_\_\_

VEHICLE REPAIR ☐ VEHICLE WASH ☐ MEDICAL OFFICE ☐ PROFESSIONAL OFFICE ☐ BANK ☐ RESTAURANT ☐ BAR/NIGHTCLUB ☐

HAIR/NAIL SALON ☐ LODGING ☐ # OF BEDROOMS: \_\_\_\_\_ SHORT TERM VACATION RENTAL ☐ # OF BEDROOMS: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD CARE ☐ # OF CHILDREN \_\_\_\_\_ PERSONAL CARE HOME ☐ TYPE: \_\_\_\_\_ # OF PEOPLE: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

SQUARE FOOTAGE: \_\_\_\_\_ SEATS (IF APPLICABLE): \_\_\_\_\_ EMPLOYEES: \_\_\_\_\_

It is the responsibility of every business owner or operator to make certain that the type or nature of business activity being conducted at any location in the City of Savannah is permitted by and conforms to the Zoning Ordinance and Building Regulations of the City before signing a lease/contract and operating the business.

I understand that construction work to any space will require a permit prior to performance of said construction work, which includes alterations, modifications, renovations, remodeling, signage, etc. or risk stop work fees, which currently are \$500.

I hereby certify that I have answered all of the questions contained herein and know the same to be true and correct. Further, I understand that any Development Services approval issued, based upon false information or misrepresentation provided by the applicant, will be null and void and subject to penalty as provided by law and ordinances.

Printed Name – Business Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Zoning District: \_\_\_\_\_ Use #: \_\_\_\_\_ Use Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parking Required: \_\_\_\_\_ Parking Provided: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer/Date: \_\_\_\_\_ ZBA ☐ Site Plan ☐ Special Use ☐ Amendment ☐ Plan #(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Building: No further review required: \_\_\_\_\_ Inspection required: \_\_\_\_\_ Permit required: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer/Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes (Date of Inspection, Permit #): \_\_\_\_\_



## SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTAL CODE VERIFICATION FORM

The City of Savannah has developed this form for the use of a residence rented as a short-term vacation rental which is considered a lodging establishment. The following minimum safety guidelines are recommendations only, and should not be construed to be all-encompassing.

### Primary Exit:

1. At least one exit door with direct access to the outside, or to a protected corridor in the case of a condominium or apartment building, should be provided per dwelling unit.
2. The exit door should be side hinged and not less than 3 feet wide x 6 feet 8 inches tall.
3. A landing should be provided on each side of an exterior exit door. The landing width should not be less than the door served, and should be a minimum of 36 inches measured in the direction of travel.
4. The exit door should open from the inside without the use of a key, tool or special knowledge.
5. Handrails should be provided on at least one side of each continuous run of stairs.
6. Stairs and decks should be properly constructed and maintained.

### Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings:

Basements and every sleeping room should have at least one operable window or door leading directly to a public street, public alley, yard, court. Commercial buildings with three or more condominiums or apartments protected by an operational sprinkler system are exempt from having emergency escape openings.

Windows used as emergency sleeping room exits should have the following:

- Window sill height should not be higher than 44 inches above the floor.
- Minimum clear window opening of 5.7 square feet or 5 square feet if at ground level.
- Minimum clear window opening height, 24 inches.
- Minimum clear window opening width, 20 inches.
- Windows should be operational from the inside of a sleeping room without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.
- Bars, grills, and similar devices are not recommended over rescue openings. If present, they must open from the inside without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.
- Windows under decks should fully open and have a minimum 36 inch high direct path to a public street, public alley, yard or court.

Smoke Alarms:

1. One listed 10 year battery smoke alarm is recommended inside and outside of each sleeping room and on each additional story of the dwelling, including the basement.
2. ANSI/UL 2034 listed or CSA 6.19 carbon monoxide alarms should be installed in the general vicinity of each sleeping area.

Fire Extinguishers:

1. A minimum of one portable, 5 pound type ABC fire extinguisher per floor should be provided and maintained.
2. It is recommended that one fire extinguisher be placed in the kitchen area.

In addition to the recommendations above, it is highly recommended that mechanical, electrical and plumbing professionals inspect the building systems to ensure they are in good working order.

The owner acknowledges that the residence was not designed, constructed or inspected as a commercial lodging establishment. All of the foregoing information is hereby given and all of the foregoing statements are hereby made on oath, willfully, knowingly, and absolutely, and the same is and are hereby sworn to be true under penalty for false swearing, as provided by law.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, having been administered a lawful oath or affirmation, hereby certify under penalty of false swearing (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-71) that the above information is true and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Owner's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Sworn to and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_\_\_.

Notary Public



### SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTAL (STVR) AGENT WRITTEN CERTIFICATION

Address of STVR Property: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of STVR Property Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

STVR Agent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

STVR Agent Address: \_\_\_\_\_

STVR Agent 24-hour phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Agent Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ representing \_\_\_\_\_ am charged with the following duties and responsibilities for maintaining good relations between guests residing in the above-named property and the City of Savannah. As the short-term vacation rental agent, I will:

1. Be reasonably available to handle any problems arising from use of the short-term vacation rental unit;
2. Appear on the premises of any short-term vacation rental unit within two hours following notification from the City of issues related to the use or occupancy of the premises. This includes, but is not limited to, notification that occupants of the STVR unit have created unreasonable noise or disturbances, engaged in disorderly conduct or committed violations of the City of Savannah Code of Ordinances or other applicable law pertaining to noise, disorderly conduct, overcrowding, consumption of alcohol or use of illegal drugs. Failure of the agent to timely appear to two or more complaints regarding violations may be grounds for penalties as set forth in this Chapter. This is not intended to impose a duty to act as a peace officer or otherwise require the agent to place himself or herself in a perilous situation;
3. Receive and accept service of any notice of violation related to the use or occupancy of the premises; and
4. Monitor the short-term vacation rental unit for compliance with Part 8, Chapter 11 entitled Short-Term Vacation Rental of the City Ordinance.

I verify that I am a natural person and am over the age of 18 years old. I also acknowledge receiving a copy of Part 8, Chapter 11, of City Code, have reviewed it, understand its requirements, and will comply with its regulations.

I hereby certify that I have answered all the questions contained herein and know the same to be true and correct. Further, I understand that any Tourism Management and Ambassadorship approval issued, based upon false information or misrepresentation provided by the applicant, will be null and void and subject to penalty as provided by law and ordinances.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of STVR Rental Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





*If the STVR rental agent changes temporarily or permanently, the property owner must notify the Tourism Management Department in writing of the new agent's identity. Only one STVR agent may be in place at any given time.*

## EXEMPLAR AGREEMENT

**As part of the application, property owners must submit a copy of an exemplar agreement which is executed between the property owner and occupant(s).**

Welcome to Savannah! **Vacation Rentals in Savannah** is committed to providing you with the very best experience. In addition, we work closely with our neighbors to ensure the quality of life that residents and visitors both expect. Enclosed is information regarding neighborhood policies and local laws and regulations. Please keep in mind that violations of any of these rules can lead to fines or even eviction without refund. We know that you'll do your part to be a great neighbor in Savannah!

Please be mindful of the City of Savannah Noise Ordinance. As you are staying in a residential area, we would like to remind you to observe neighborhood quiet times between the hours of 9pm – 8am. Please remember that sound carries very well throughout Savannah, most especially in courtyards, porches, patios, and verandas.

Guests must not exceed the listed occupancy of each property.

Guests must not exceed the maximum parking allotted to each property.

Guests must park only in designated parking places. Please be mindful of street sweeping zones and parking meters throughout the city.

Savannah does have leash laws and leashes are required for any pet taken off property. Pet waste must be cleaned up immediately.

While "to-go" cups are legal in parts of the city, public intoxication is unlawful and may result in heavy fines and/or incarceration.

Savannah has very strict litter laws. Please be sure that all litter, trash, and cigarette butts are placed in waste receptacles. Help keep Savannah beautiful!

Household trash and recycling must be placed in City of Savannah collection carts specific to the property. Trash bags and recycling may not be left outside of the collection carts, left on porches, or left in lanes.

Laundry and towels must not be hung to dry on any exterior portion of the property, including, porch rails, fences, gates, or banisters.

### **Helpful Hints for your Stay in Savannah:**

9-1-1 is the phone number for emergency services in the city.

Savannah is a walking city and our architecture and squares are best enjoyed on foot. Please remember to only cross streets in designated crosswalks. And, as in most cities, jaywalking is punishable by a fine. Obey all pedestrian signals and signage.

Bicycles are a great mode of transportation in Savannah; however, bicycles are prohibited in squares, parks, and sidewalks throughout Savannah.

If you happen to be locked out of your property, please contact your rental agent. Neighbors and surrounding businesses do not have spare keys to the property.

48-hour parking passes are available for \$12 from Savannah's Parking Services Office at 100 East Bryan Street, the Savannah Visitor's Center at 301 MLK Blvd, or by calling (912) 651-6470. The pass provides parking at any meter, with a time limit of one hour or more. It also includes complimentary parking at any of the City owned Parking Garages.

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Short-term Vacation Rental Occupant

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Date